

alities of the Harper, Eaton, and Snyder administrations no changes were made in the health department without notification and consultation. Of course we were country people then, but we did very well with our health department, and we were always ready to meet emergencies when they arose. The medical profession was always consulted, and of the members of the board of health at least two were medical men.

Through a change, which I do not understand, the health board during the present administration has consisted of laymen altogether. I do not know how or why this occurred, but it is bad business and distinctly inimical to the medical profession, the members of which are better qualified by their education and by their attainments in health matters, to pass upon such matters than any set of laymen who could be chosen.

I have no brief to defend Doctor Parrish; he has been a wonderfully capable health officer. . . .

The present board has chosen a good clean man to succeed Doctor Parrish, but a man without any definite experience in health matters, and he unquestionably is being placed in a position where, under the present method of constituting a health board, he is liable to be sorry that he accepted the appointment.

Under any circumstances, I warmly commend to the councilors of the Los Angeles County Medical Association the advisability of informing themselves, if a change cannot be made in the character of the appointments, so that the Los Angeles County Medical Association be represented by at least two members on the board of health, and that at least one of the remaining members be a sanitary engineer.

Gentlemen, accept my respects.

GRANVILLE MacGOWAN.

Subject of Following Letters: A Query to Eastern Public Health Authorities on Los Angeles Public Health Situation, and Replies Thereto.

To the Editor:—In connection with some recent events in the health department of the city of Los Angeles, I am taking the liberty of sending to CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE copies of a letter which I wrote, and the replies thereto from H. S. Cumming, M. D., surgeon general of the United States Public Health Service and from John A. Ferrell, M. D., of the International Health Division of the Rockefeller Foundation. It seems to me that these reply letters should be of interest to members of the California Medical Association.

Respectfully submitted,

Los Angeles.

E. H. ANTHONY.

Letter From Doctor Anthony to Doctors Ferrell and Cumming

October 28, 1931.

John A. Ferrell, M. D.,
Associate Editor, Rockefeller Foundation,
61 Broadway, New York City, N. Y.

and
Hugh S. Cumming, M. D.,
Surgeon General, U. S. Public Health Service,
Washington, D. C.

Dear Doctors:

Having been at one time a health commissioner of Los Angeles, and being interested in public health, I would like to submit to you for my own information a hypothetical question.

The charter of the city of Los Angeles requires that a doctor shall have at least three years' administrative experience in health work before he can qualify for the position of health officer.

Would three years as colonel in the Medical Corps of the United States Army during the World War, with no other public health experience, and in private practice since that time, qualify a physician and surgeon for this position?

Personally I believe that the very best medical officer of experience in public health should be secured for a city of over a million people as has Los Angeles, and I am also opposed to a layman board of health.

Trusting to hear from you, I am

Fraternally yours,

E. H. ANTHONY.

Reply of Surgeon General Cumming

November 3, 1931.

My dear Dr. Anthony:

I have your letter of October 28, addressed to Dr. Ferrell and myself, requesting our opinion as to whether service for three years as colonel in the Medical Corps of the Army during the World War and private practice since that time with no other public health experience would qualify a physician and surgeon for the position of health commissioner of Los Angeles, and informing us that your city charter requires three years' administrative experience in public health work as a prerequisite for appointment to a position of health officer.

I thoroughly agree with you that a city such as Los Angeles should employ none but an experienced man for such an important position. Your question is rather hard to answer categorically unless one knows the particular duties to which the man was assigned during his service as a medical officer of the Army during the war. For instance, if he spent his three years' service upon a detail in connection with sanitation, acting as health officer of camps or communities, the experience would certainly be very valuable in giving an opportunity for study of public health methods. If, on the other hand, the individual were simply engaged in surgical work or administrative work other than public health, such service would have been of comparatively little use.

It has been thirteen years since the war ended and during this period there have been marked advances both in administrative and technical public health work. If such an individual had dissociated himself from contact or interest in public health work and devoted himself to ordinary clinical medicine during that period, he would certainly be greatly handicapped in assuming the office of commissioner in charge of the health of such a great city as Los Angeles.

Sincerely yours,

H. S. CUMMING,
Surgeon-General.

Reply of Associate Director Ferrell

November 4, 1931.

Replying to your letter of October 28, I beg to advise that I have noticed from the newspapers that Doctor Parrish has been succeeded as health officer by Dr. Charles W. Decker. I regret I do not know these gentlemen well enough to warrant an opinion as to their respective qualifications as city health officer. In general I am an ardent advocate of placing public health on a professional basis and as rapidly as practicable requiring minimum eligibility qualifications for the important positions. The preparation for the work, I believe, would involve both school of public health training and successful experience.

Very truly yours,

JOHN A. FERRELL.

Subject of Following Letter: Notice from California Board of Medical Examiners' Office on an "Insurance Company Laboratory" Solicitor.

San Francisco, California,

November 6, 1931.

Yours of October 8,

Re: E. Osmun (or Osman).

Gordon L. Helstrom, M. D.,
115 South Sierra Avenue,
Fontana, California.

Dear Doctor:

The California Medical Association has forwarded us your letter relating your experiences with E. Osmun, an alleged M. D., who you state is traveling around the state claiming to represent about 120 insurance companies and that he has been delegated to select a medical examiner in each town, his reimbursement consisting of \$1 for each specimen of urine sent to the San Diego Laboratories; however, each examiner selected by him is charged a fee for "form blanks and containers for urine."

Robert P. Little, M. D., 139 North Tenth Street, Santa Paula, relates a similar experience with a "Dr. Osman of Hollywood, (claiming to be) a graduate of Columbia University Medical College some thirty years ago," who called on Dr. Little, stating that he represented leading insurance companies, relating that the examination of urine was to be made in his "Hollywood Laboratory," he requesting Dr. Little to give him \$3.50 in advance to pay for postage necessary to send Dr. Little's name to the various insurance companies.

Osmun is apparently working a petty "racket," the sum involved being so small that no doubt he will be able to impose on a number of licentiates.

We are sending a copy of this letter to Dr. Little, who fortunately was suspicious and is, therefore, \$3.50 ahead of the game.

We hope that more licentiates, when approached by Osmun will be suspicious, which will soon put a stop to this new "racket."

We will use our every endeavor to head him off and will suggest to the editor of CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE that they issue a warning in that publication.

Very truly yours,

C. B. PINKHAM, M. D.,
Secretary-Treasurer.